Faatihah

the Opening Chapter of The Glorious Qur'aan

A Brief Interpretation of The 'Faatihah' based on Ibn Kahtir, In the Shade of The Glorious Qur'aan, Al-Jalalain, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Alosi & Al-Nasafi

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تفسير سورة الفاتحة

باللغة الإنكليزية

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الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

Bismil-lah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim
(In the Name of Allaah, the Beneficent, Most Merciful)

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OF
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE MERCIFUL THE COMPASSIONATE**

FAATIHAH

THE OPENING CHAPTER OF THE GLORIOUS QUR'AAN

Faatihah is placed at the beginning of the Glorious Qur'aan by the universal consent of Muslim scholars. It sums up the entire message of the Glorious Qur'aan which is based on the Oneness of Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and sincerity in worship and submission to Him, the Almighty.

Faatihah illustrates man's relationship with Allaah, the Almighty in contemplation and prayer.

Praise of Allaah, the Almighty stems from the innermost part of the human spirit bringing him into union with Allaah, the Almighty. The human being is allowed to recognise His authority, magnificence and grace in many ways through the Faatihah. In such a state of mind, goodness, peace and harmony become apparent. Evil, rebellion and conflict are purged.

Allaah, of course, needs no praise from His creatures. He is above all praise. He needs no petition, for He knows our needs better than we do ourselves. His bounties are open for all mankind without asking. Righteous and sinner alike are blessed with His bounties.

Prayer, however, is for our own spiritual education, consolation and confirmation.

The attribute "Rahman" (Most Gracious) in particular is not used or applied to anything or anyone but Allaah, the Almighty unlike the other attribute "Raheem" (Most Merciful.)

Allaah, the Almighty calls for understanding of all the worlds He has created, which are indeed numerous, some of which we are aware, while others are unknown to us.

There is nothing worthy of our devotion other then Allaah, the Almighty. He, the Almighty, Alone brings about good and prevents evil.

Those who break Allaah's Laws and Commandments deserve His wrath and darkness.

But, those who stray out of carelessness or negligence are misguided.

Both, however, are responsible for their acts or short-comings.

Allaah will protect those who submit their will to Him, believe in Him, obey His commands and trust Him whole-heartedly.

Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim reported and authenticated based on Muslim that Anas (raa) said: "Once, Allaah's Apostle, peace be upon him, was walking in the company of his companions. He turned to the man next to him and said: "Should I tell you about the most virtuous portion of the Glorious Qur'aan?" The man responded: "Yes, please do." He (pbuh), recited: "All Praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds..."

Prior to reciting any verse, chapter (Soorah) or any portion of the Glorious Qur'aan, it is urged and recommended to seek refuge with Allaah, the Almighty, from the evil of the cursed devil (Anhu, bil-lahi, minash-shaitan-ir-Rajim.) Thus, one will seek protection with Allaah, the Almighty from the devil who brings about no goodness whatsoever. One should seek refuge and protection with Allaah. the Almighty so as no harm is imposed on him from that evil, as Ibn Kathir has stated.

Saying (In the name of Allaah) implies that one will begin recitation with the name of Allaah, the Almighty. This statement is encouraged and recommended when one begins any lawful act, regardless of nature, in life.

Abu Dawood reported that Allaah's Apostle (pbuh) said: "Any important act (that one performs) that does not begin with "In the Name of Allaah, the Beneficent, Most Merciful" is missing something, cut off and incomplete."

Allaah, the Almighty described Himself with two extremely important qualities both of which are derived from the same root word in the Arabic language, "Mercy." Both attributes are a exaggeration of the act of Mercy. The first, ar-Rahman. the Beneficent is far reaching, extensive and high meaning given to the act of Mercy. The second, Ar-Raheem, the Most Merciful is believed to be the most encompassing word on the Earth in any language, beyond the imagination or expression of the word Mercy its derivatives as attributed to Allaah, the Almighty. He, the Almighty, is the only source of Mercy. His Mercy is far better than all that man can gather or accumulate. The Mercy of Allaah, the Almighty is capable of absorbing both heaven and earth. He is more merciful than a mother to her only sick, weak and small baby.

The statement "All Praise is due to Allaah" (Al-Hamdu-Lil-Lah) is a reporting statement which means to give all the due, appropriate and complete praise to Allaah, the Almighty for His continuous, never-ending and most complete favour bestowed upon man and all Allaah's creatures. He, the Almighty, owns, possesses, and controls all Praise. He is the Only One who is worthy of all praise. He is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Cherisher, the Caretaker, the Omnipotent and the Master of all beings. The Word "Allaah" is a proper noun given to no one other than The Almighty. The word God in English with a capital "G" falls short of the expression of the Magnificent Deity,

the Almighty, the Perfect concept of the Maker and Originator of the entire creation.

He, Allaah, the Almighty, is the only Deity worthy of worship and praise. Nothing is like Him. He is above all of His creation. Nothing came before Him to proceed Him. His place is above the heavens, on His own Thrown. Human beings are unable to comprehend the manner, form and shape that Allaah, the Almighty has chosen for Himself. Muslims, however, fully and wholeheartedly believe that He sits on His Thrown above the entire earth and heavens. This throne cannot be described as a seat, a thrown in the form of sitting any human knowledge and understanding. He, the Almighty is beyond time, place, and space. Human sight, or any other visual ability cannot begin to envision Allaah, the Almighty or to look upon His place of being or existence with true actual vision or in dreams or the visionary powers of the human brain.

The visionary powers of man cannot reach Him, the Almighty. But He, the Almighty seizes and controls all the visionary powers of all mankind. He is the Most Kind, Most Knowledgeable.

Allaah, the Almighty is the King, the Owner, the Judge and the One who decides all disputes between men, his actions, his ideologies in worship, his association of other gods with Allaah, the Almighty, his acts of obedience and disobedience committed in the sight of Allaah. He, the Almighty is the Governor, the Ruler and the Mighty Power that sets all people right according to their intentions, actions, behaviour (concealed and open). He, the Almighty knows the inner most secrets of man, this little creature, though man may think so great of himself. He, the Almighty knows the acts of betrayal and what the hearts and minds attempt to conceal from other. Only Allaah, the Almighty is entitled to judgement in accordance with his extremely accurate and detailed records. Man's very own hands, legs, tongue, lips and entire skin will testify.

On the day of judgement, man will wonder at the betrayal of his organs. Yet, they will be unable to hide or deny their use. They will be subject to Allaah's Instructions as the Enabler of All Things. Allaah, the Almighty will allow man, beast, tree and rocks testify by His Command, the Almighty.

Allaah, the Almighty is the Lord, the Caretaker, the Cherisher and the Sustainer of all beings and all the worlds in their various shapes, forms, sorts and kinds. Allaah's worlds are all entities that exist by the Command of Allaah, as stated by Qurtubi in his well-known Tafsir of the Glorious Qur'aan.

Man must declare his intention to worship Allaah Alone. No other deities are worthy or entitled to be worshipped but Allaah, the Almighty.

One must declare his submission willingly and wholehearted to Allaah, the Almighty.

One must obey the entire Commandments of Allaah, the Almighty without external imposition upon him. The guidelines set up for man by Allaah, the Almighty has set for man have been taught through His Messengers and Prophets. One must follow these commands precisely and to the best of one's abilities.

Man must adhere to the laws set forth for man on earth by Allaah, the Almighty. One must accept these laws willingly without argument or discussion to avoid denial of the Authority of Allaah, the Almighty. Following one's own whims, desires, passions and traditions of one's forefathers, man risks becoming corrupted and misguided further. For these reasons, man must oblige himself to follow the rules and regulations set forth by Allaah, the Almighty for him. Man must adhere to the principles of faith and belief established by Allaah, the Almighty. Man must follow and abide by the rules and regulations set by Allaah, the Almighty in terms of all rituals of worship such as prayer, fasting, charity,

pilgrimage, and all other dealings in human life such as financial transactions, crime and punishment, marriage and divorce as well as all other matters.

Man should, first and foremost, seek help and assistance from Allaah, His creator and Caretaker. Man must realise that no one power to harm or benefit him except according to destiny prescribed by Allaah, the Almighty.

Man must leave no space in his heart for any other deity, friend, relative, father, son, daughter, wife, governor, leader, magnificent man or power but Allaah, the Almighty.

"Thee we worship, and from Thee we seek help."

Man must seek the guidance from Allaah, the Almighty Alone toward the Right, Straight and Complete Path to success. This is a path that has no detours and no curves leading to Allaah, the Almighty.

Man must pray wholeheartedly to be tied tightly to this straight path. This straight path is nothing more than Islaam, the most authentic, complete and direct path to Allaah, the Almighty.

Islaam is the path of those upon whom Allaah, the Almighty has bestowed His favour. Therefore, committed Muslims are completely obedient to Allaah, the Almighty. Among these are Allaah's Angels, His Prophets, His Messengers, being who believe fully in Him, martyrs who witness to the reality of Allaah, the Almighty and the rightly-guided persons who truly worship Allaah alone, as Ibn Kathir states in his Tafsir.

The verses continue to say, "those who received Your Wrath," which indicates that Muslims, believers and committed beings must avoid the style, way of life, character, behaviour and conduct of those who are labelled to have received the wrath of Allaah, the Almighty. Otherwise, such people will subject themselves and

their souls to the Wrath of Allaah, the Almighty which descends at His command.

Muslims are urged not to follow, immolate or closely associate with such cursed people who have received Allaah's Wrath.

Allaah's Apostle, (pbuh) said: "He who appears like a certain people (or individuals) will be gathered with them (on the same footing) on the Day of Judgement."

He, (pbuh) also said: "He who takes the (shape) appearance of certain kind of people (or individuals) will be considered a part of them."

Furthermore, Allaah's Apostle, (pbuh) said: "A man (person) will be gathered along with those who he loves (or likes)."

Avoiding such groups of people is the responsibility of each and every committed believing Muslim. One must be aware of their plots and acts to attract, pull, immerse and put simple-minded believers under their influence. Such groups of people named to deserve Allaah's wrath are the Jews of Moses, Jacob and Israel, according to the Tafsir of Ibn Kathir.

All other people whose faith and belief became corrupt are also included in this verse, Allaah is the Best-Knower. All people who befriend, deal with or associate to any degree with such corrupted groups must also be avoided.

Such corrupted group of people may know the essence of truth, the laws of Allaah and the codes of good practices, but, unfortunately, choose to divert, abandon and refuse to follow the laws of Allaah while actively urging others not to follow.

Such corrupted groups wish to share their distorted beliefs and evil practices to avoid being singled out among the rest for their ill behaviour.

As for the misguided, those who claim to be Christians, they are missing a great deal of divine knowledge. Their scriptures have lost essence. The priests and disciples of Jesus, (pbuh) such as Paul, Luke and John are the original authors of the Bible. This Bible has been updated so many times with many versions still in use and in demand on the market. Many scholars and men of divinity have altered, changed, corrected, added and even omitted much of the existing Bible. Catholics have their own version, or rather versions of the Bible which differ from the Baptist and other sects. The Orthodox have their own versions. The Constantine Conference of Nicia in 370 AD. demonstrated withstanding evidence to the truth of multiple versions of the Bible. All versions were condemned and ordered burnt except four. It is a given fact that the scriptures have neither been written, dictated, ordered or preserved by any authority. Logically, this leads to distortion, change, alterations and falsification according to historical events, political notions, preferences of the sects and other serious discrepancies.

Thus, we must conclude that the followers of such scriptures are not following an authentic, complete, well preserved and protected version. Therefore, they are, in a sense, misguided from the truth and reality of their book.

To substantiate this fact, Hatim bin 'Adi reported, as narrated by Hammad Bin Salamah, Ahmad and Tirmidhee that he asked Allaah's Apostle (pbuh) about the statement in the Glorious Qur'aan: "Those who received the wrath of Allaah." He (pbuh) said: "They are the Jews." And when asked about: "Those who are misguided," he (pbuh) said: "They are the Christians."

Aameen is a sound that implies the request to fulfil the prayers of mankind.

Faatihah, the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'aan is called "The Mother of the Book." It resembles a "Mother" because she,

the mother, is capable of gathering, helping and containing all in one household and, in many instances, an entire family.

Faatihah contains all the acts of worship to Allaah, the Almighty, which include the act of praise, confession and open testimony that He, Allaah, the Almighty is the Lord of the all worlds, the Oneness of Allaah, the basis and essence of true monotheism, belief in the hereafter, the true request for help and dependency on Allaah Alone, the true seeking of guidance from Him, adherence to His Laws, the most predominate and accurate, His path of Guidance, the Straight path of Islaam and total submission to His Will, denial of all other deities, corrupted belief and misguidance of man.

Allaah's Apostle (pbuh) said: "A prayer (Salaat) is incomplete unless one recites Faatihah in each and every Rakah."

Muslims recites the Faatihah at least (17) seventeen times in the course of praying five (5) daily obligatory prayers alone in addition to the other Sunnah and voluntary prayers.

Allaah, the Almighty, has described Faatihah as "The seven great verses and as the Entire Glorious Qur'aan."

Allaah's Apostle (pbuh) confirmed the fact that Muslims should recite this "Soorah" (chapter) of the Glorious Qur'aan as a means of protection from harmful things.

In short, Faatihah is a treasure that should be cherished, maintained and preserved for one's entire life.

A Muslim must learn this "Soorah" at a very early stage in life, teach it to his children at a very early age, understand it and act upon it throughout his life as much as possible.

A non-Muslim, on the other hand may examine this wealth of sound prayers and supplications which is never exhausted. He

would do well to study the meanings of the ideas of appreciation, meditation and worship to the One and Only God, Allaah, the Almighty. He may see for himself what the general idea of Islaam is away from the bias, hard feelings, jealousy, arguments, discussion and attack on one's faith and practices. This calm, sincere, serious, intellectual, and examining study may lead to a better understanding of the basic issues of the Glorious Qur'aan and could enable any person with an inquisitive mind to come closer to Islaam, the religion of Allaah, the Almighty. Indeed, such an acquisition may be the most profitable, rewarding and fruitful gain one may acquire throughout an entire life.

Allaah, the Almighty is the best from Whom to seek guidance, and with Whom to seek protection and refuge.

Peace to All.

Mohammed Said Dabas
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